

Clark County, Washington Endangered Species Act Information

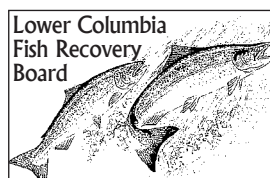
What is Clark County doing to save salmon?

In response to the listings of threatened fish, Clark County has implemented an Endangered Species Program to address ESA requirements and to inform the public about the importance of these issues. The Endangered Species Program is working cooperatively with numerous groups, ranging from federal, state, and local governments to citizen groups, Native American groups, the business community, environmentalists, and other organizations. The program staff, which includes two full-time employees and one part-time employee, is developing a response to the 4(d) rule, working with an advisory committee to develop a salmon recovery plan, and informing the public about ESA and salmon recovery issues that affect them. Here's a look at some of the efforts currently underway:

Working regionally

The decline of fish species is a regional problem that extends well beyond Clark County. Because watersheds and fish cross government and political boundaries, Clark County is just one of the local governments involved in responding to these Endangered Species Act listings. For that reason, Clark County's local efforts are being coordinated with the goals and objectives of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB), a regional entity established by the state legislature in 1998. The LCFRB is a group of 15 volunteers

that includes a commissioner from each affected Washington county (Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum), as well as representatives of cities, tribes, state lawmakers, hydroelectric utilities, small timber owners, property rights advocates, and the environmental community.



This group continues to research the problems and potential solutions to salmon recovery while coordinating recovery efforts across the region. Additionally, Clark County is working with other regional governments in southwest Washington and northern Oregon to coordinate salmon recovery efforts and public outreach.

ESA Compliant Regional Road Maintenance activities

Working in conjunction with the Regional Forum in the Tri-County region (King, Pierce and Snohomish), Clark County has recently applied to NOAA Fisheries for ESA compliance for all of its routine road maintenance activities, under Limit 10 of the 4(d) rule. Twenty five jurisdictions, mostly in the Seattle area have already had their applications accepted. It is anticipated that Clark County and a few other applicants in the same batch will soon be granted similar compliance status. When its application is formally accepted, Clark County will be in full compliance with the ESA when it conducts routine road maintenance practices. To qualify for this designation Clark

County had to train all of its road crew and many other staff members about the importance of fish and how to protect their habitat. This includes the designing and maintenance of road facilities and projects using best management practices.

Here are a few examples of what the Clark County's Operations Division does differently now, as compared to before salmon and steelhead were listed under the ESA. Instead of relying on chemical treatments that can cause water quality and habitat concerns, the county relies primarily on mechanical means such as mowing or brush cutting to control vegetation along roadsides. The department also uses alternatives to diesel to clean asphalt/oil equipment and tools and has installed drip pans to help collect excess oil from equipment. Additionally, they have reduced the amount of oil used in cold mix overlays and now use polymer modified oil in chip sealing to reduce the chance of oil runoff. For more information, contact Bud Cave at (360) 394-2446 or bud.cave@clark.wa.gov.

Noxious weeds are controlled through a contract with Clark County Weed Management, which uses a spot-spray program that targets only the noxious weeds for control, greatly reducing the amount of pesticides applied. *For more information on Weed Management's spot-spray program, contact Phil Burgess at (360) 254-2034 or phil.burgess@clark.wa.gov.*

Water cleanup

When it rains, stormwater rushes over roads and other hard surfaces, picking up everything from sediment to oil and pesticides. These pollutants make

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their way into our creeks, rivers, lakes, and groundwater, either directly or via our storm sewer system—roadside ditches, culverts, and ponds. To meet state and federal clean water standards and to improve water for drinking, recreation, and for fish, Clark County is taking extra steps to clean our stormwater. Under the Clean Water Act/NPDES permit that was issued in July 1999, the county is taking better care of stormwater ponds, storm sewers, ditches, and other drainage facilities; improving measures to control erosion and increase inspections to enforce development regulations; involving citizens and businesses in reducing pollution; and monitoring and evaluating water quality and volumes of water flow. Clark County's Stormwater Pollution Control Manual was created to help businesses comply with the county's Water Quality Ordinance, adopted to protect rivers and streams from stormwater runoff. *For more information about stormwater programs, contact Earl Rowell at (360) 397-6118 ext. 4580 or earl.rowell@clark.wa.gov.*

Fish barrier removal

Culverts, which divert streams to accommodate road and bridge construction, often create barriers to fish passage. Clark County's Public Works Department has recently removed fish barriers at the following locations:

- Winkler and Coyote creeks on the Washougal River near the Skamania County line.
 - Lockwood, Brickle, and Riley creeks on the East Fork of the Lewis River.
 - John Creek on NE Cedar Creek Road, North Fork of the Lewis River.
- Funding for these projects includes \$245,000 in grants. The county is also currently investigating replacement of culverts in the East Fork of Lewis River, Cedar Creek and the Washougal River. *For more information please contact Heath Henderson at heath.henderson@clark.wa.gov.*

Planting the East Fork

With state and federal grants, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department and other partners are establishing native plants along several miles of the East Fork of the Lewis River and in the Vancouver Lake lowlands. The trees will provide shade on the river, which cools the water and benefits fish. *For additional information, contact Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation at (360) 696-8171. To volunteer to help restore stream banks in Clark County, contact Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation at (360) 696-8171 ext. 8455 or parksrec@ci.vancouver.wa.us.*

Erosion control

Muddy water can damage stormwater treatment facilities and clog drainage systems. This can lead to poor water quality, flooding, and property damage. Muddy water can also carry mud and nutrients to our streams and lakes. This can lead to sediment deposits, algae blooms, and oxygen levels too low to support fish. Sediment can smother fish spawning gravel, cloud the water, and make feeding difficult for fish and other aquatic animals. The County is working to continuously improve its Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Program. Contractor certification is one of the proactive approaches the county has included in its regulations starting in 2001. This education based certification program is showing positive results in the field. Because stormwater and erosion control is critical to the protection of fish species, the penalties for erosion control violations were increased in 1999. *For more information, contact Code Enforcement at (360) 397-2375 ext. 4184 or sheila.pendletn@clark.wa.gov or scott.melville@clark.wa.gov.*

Acquisition of priority habitat

Clark County has used several programs to preserve high quality habitat that promotes salmon recovery. They include the county's Conservation Futures Open Space Program, the state Department of Natural Resources' Aquatic Lands Enhancement Program and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The programs provide funds to acquire high priority open space and habitat lands, much of which is high priority salmon habitat. Key areas for land acquisition include the lower East Fork Lewis River, North Fork Lewis River, Salmon Creek, and the Washougal River. Recent purchases include 258-acre Eagle Island and 89 acres of critical riparian habitat along the East Fork Lewis River, creating a vital link in the river's greenway system that will eventually include a 2.5-mile wildlife trail along the north bank of the river connecting Lewisville and Daybreak parks. *For additional information, contact Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation at (360) 696-8171 or parksrec@ci.vancouver.wa.us.*

ESA Advisory Committee

In December 1998, the Board of Clark County Commissioners appointed an 18-member Endangered Species Act Citizen Advisory Committee to assist the county in developing a local salmon recovery plan. The members represent conservationists, rural land owners, development interests, fish recovery groups, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others. The advisory committee has drafted an outline for what fish in Clark County need and has made recommendations for language changes to the Comprehensive Plan that reflect the need to protect salmon. The committee has also helped with ESA education and will develop recommendations to the county commissioners for amendments to county ordinances that

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will help in fish recovery. *For more information, contact John Tyler at (360) 397-2022 or john.tyler@clark.wa.gov.*

Lucia Falls

Lucia Falls Regional Park provides precious spawning and rearing habitat for imperiled steelhead, sea-run cut-throat trout, and Chinook salmon. For that reason, the Board of Clark County Commissioners approved a recommendation from the county's ESA Advisory Committee to bar further water contact at the regional park. Swimming, wading, boating, and other water activities are prohibited year-round and fishing is prohibited from the lower end of Big Eddy to 100 feet above Lucia Falls. Plans are currently underway to create a facility at Lucia Falls that promotes greater understanding of the park's natural processes and cultural history. *For additional information, contact Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation at (360) 696-8171 or parksrec@ci.vancouver.wa.us.*

4(d) Compliance

The 4(d) rule is named after Section 4, Part (d) of the Endangered Species Act, which requires the federal government to publish rules to limit, regulate, or prohibit activities that can damage listed species or their habitats. The National Marine Fisheries Service is working with local counties and communities to develop local solutions to the fish protection problem, and is working cooperatively with Clark County to find protective measures that work for our county. The county has developed a 4(d) Compliance Work Plan to ensure that the county's ordinances respond to statutory mandates surrounding environmental issues. The plan includes reviewing three basins in the county to develop a baseline survey of the biological health of fish in these basins. This information will help the county determine how its ordinances will impact salmon as the

county grows and development continues. *For more information about the county's response to the 4(d) rule, contact Joel Rupley at the Clark County Endangered Species Program, (360) 397-2022 or joel.rupley@clark.wa.gov.*

Partnership with Environmental Information Cooperative

Clark County is a funding partner of the Environmental Information Cooperative (EIC), created to respond to community environmental education needs. Some of the EIC programs that relate to salmon recovery include an Environmental Speakers Bureau with a section on Salmon Recovery and Habitat Restoration; a salmon and water education program to present two educator workshops and a two-day watershed festival for fourth- and fifth-grade students; teacher training on salmon and fish recovery issues, curriculum integration, community resources, and restoration project development; and volunteer training for the River Ranger program for youth on water and watersheds. *For more information, contact Carrie Kraten at (360) 546-9509 or kraten@vancouver.wsu.edu.*

Storm drain stenciling program

Clark County Public Works invites volunteers from community, neighborhood, and youth groups, as well as individuals, to help protect our water by stenciling the message "Dump No Waste - Drains to Stream" on storm drains. The county supplies all materials including paint, stencils, hand-outs, and safety equipment. *Contact Cindy Stienbarger at (360) 397-6118 ext. 4584 or cindy.stienbarger@clark.wa.gov.*

Information and outreach

The county has intensified its efforts to inform citizens about salmon recovery issues. In addition to web site information, the county informs its citizens on salmon recovery issues through publications, cable access TV (CVTV), a speakers bureau, outreach

programs to schools and various youth groups, interpretive signage in its parks, and in other ways. The county's ESA video "What's good for fish is good for us" is available to individuals or groups seeking to learn more about salmon recovery efforts in the county. Additionally, the PIO office maintains a file of newspaper clippings on ESA issues that the public is welcome to browse. *For information, contact Don Strick at (360) 397-6012 ext. 8 or don.strick@clark.wa.gov.*

For more information please contact

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Please include your name, address, and telephone number.



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